

**AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS:**

The following claim set replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) Process for the preparation of a copolymer of maleic anhydride and an alkyl vinyl ether, comprising the steps of:
  - (a) continuously supplying maleic anhydride, ~~an~~ and the alkyl vinyl ether and an initiator, together forming a feed flow, through an inlet to a loop reactor;
  - (b) allowing the ~~wherein~~ maleic anhydride and the alkyl vinyl ether to react within the loop reactor to form a copolymer of maleic anhydride and alkyl vinyl ether ~~which forms in a reaction mixture with the maleic anhydride, the alkyl vinyl ether and the initiator, wherein the process is a continuous process and the reactor is a loop reactor, optionally followed by a post reactor, and wherein the process includes~~
  - (c) internally circulating the reaction mixture within the loop reactor in such a manner that the reaction mixture arrives again at the inlet before the maleic anhydride and alkyl vinyl ether have completely reacted and while a remainder of initiator is still present;
  - (d) withdrawing a part of the reaction mixture from the loop reactor and introducing the withdrawn part of the reaction mixture to a postreactor; and
  - (e) heating the withdrawn part of the reaction mixture within the postreactor to a temperature between 120 and 220°C for a time sufficient to reduce free maleic anhydride content therein to below 10 parts per million, based on the total weight of the reaction mixture.
2. (Original) The process of claim 1, wherein the feed flow to the loop reactor further comprises a diluent, a diluent mixture a solvent or a solvent mixture.

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3. (Previously Presented) Process according to claim 1, wherein the feed flow comprises a molar ratio of maleic anhydride to initiator of between 100 and 10,000.
4. (Previously Presented) Process according to claim 1, wherein the feed flow comprises a molar ratio of alkyl vinyl ether to maleic anhydride of between 1.05 and 5.
5. (Previously Presented) Process according to claim 1, wherein the alkyl vinyl ether is a C1-C4 alkyl vinyl ether.
6. (Previously Presented) Process according to claim 1, wherein the process is carried out at a temperature between 50<sup>0</sup>C and 180<sup>0</sup>C.
7. (Previously Presented) Process according to claim 1, wherein the ratio of an internal circulation to the feed flow is at least 15.
8. – 12. (Cancelled)